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# LETTER TO THE DISSENTERS.

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The Second Edition.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for John Morphew, near Stationers-Hall,  
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# T H E P R E F A C E.

**I**T will not be taken for a Boast to say, the Letter to the Dissenters has met with a general good Reception: It was written with so much Temper, such strong (tho' cool) Reasoning, and carries so much Weight with it, that it could not fail to force its way into the Consciences and Understandings of all those, who were not prepossessed and prejudiced by Interest and Party. It is lamented by all good Men, that there are some still to be found among us, who shutting their Eyes against the Conviction of their Understandings, and stopping their Ears against the Voice of their Reason, are not to be persuaded tho' the strongest and most unanswerable Arguments were used with them.

That such as these are displeased, and appear angry at the Letter to the Dissenters, is nothing strange; seeing they are most displeased at the good Effect of it upon the Minds of the People, sorry to see many Eyes open'd which they had artfully blinded, and to see Temper and Reason begin to prevail where they had tainted the Minds of the People with the Infection of their own Prejudices.

But that which is most Wonderful, is, that these Men who have had so little to say against what is offered in the Letter, and that little, so weak and unconvincing, should yet persist in the Delusions which they are not able to defend; that they should satisfy themselves with having no more to say, and yet should think the People could be still influenced to favour a Temper and Party that they had so ill defended, and which have no more to be said in their behalf. This is in-



deed very strange, and this has moved me to enquire a little into the Force of what has been offered, either in Print or otherwise, against the Letter to the Dissenters.

The first Attempt we met with, is, from a foolish and scurrilous Libeller, the Flying-Post, who singling out a few Paragraphs, which he separates from the Connection which they ought to be allow'd to what goes before and follows after, and so wresting the Sense, would insinuate that this Letter is written by an Enemy to the Dissenters, and is a Threatning them with the Resentment of the Ministry, and charging them with Undutifulness and Disloyalty to the QUEEN.

This is so absurd a way of Dealing, that it convinces us of two Things: (1.) That no fair just way of Arguing could lie against the forcible Reasonings of the Letter; and that therefore it was to be traduced and calumniated; the true Intention and Design of it perverted; and the Author entirely misrepresented. (2.) That the Party will stick at no Methods, however unjust, to carry on their Interest, when they can no otherwise defend their Cause. And both these Things are deducible from this one Observation, To wit, That not one Man of Character or Eminence among the Dissenters has offered the least Reflection of this kind. None of the Dissenters quatenus Dissenters: But a scandalous Firebrand of Sedition, the Tool of the Faction, Impudent and full of Forgery in their Favour, upon all Occasions, below Notice and below Resentment, only on this Account I name him, That it is a Proof how willing the Faction, here spoken of, is to have the Dissenters kept in their Interest; and how soon alarm'd at an Attempt to open their Eyes. And this Rage of the Party is a Testimonial to the good Effect the Letter to the Dissenters has had, and is yet like to have in making them more Wary how they fall in with a Party whose just Correction is so certain, and whose Crimes make that Correction so necessary at this time. But this by the Way. I return to the Subject of the Letter it self.

Whoever it was that writ the Letter to the Dissenters, I do not pretend so much as to guess at him: He appears to be a Friend to their Interest, and a Friend to his Country; and,  
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# The PREFACE.

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*it is evident, he treats them in the most friendly manner throughout the whole Letter. To call it Threatning them, when he most friendly advises them to consider what may be the Consequences of their falling into the evil Measures of a Faction, is to say, A Father threatens his Son when he gives him Counsel to avoid such Mistakes and Errors, which he sees him begin to run into; and adds, as a farther Motive, a true Representation of the mischievous Consequences of such Practices to himself. It appears to me that the whole Letter is fill'd with the most friendly Cautions to the Dissenters, not to make their own Suffering a necessary Consequence of the Government's just Resentment against Faction and Insult; and so, that they should make that Resentment reach them by their being found in bad Company.*

*It would be a very mean Compliment to the Dissenters, to say, that when the said Letter lays it down as a thing certain, That the Government will, and indeed in its own Defence must, correct a fiery enraged Faction: That this should be a THREATNING to the Dissenters. I think these People should remember, that this is charging all the Insolences of a Party which, it is confessed, are come now to a strange height, upon the Dissenters; and instead of representing the Dissenters as an injured and innocent People, it blackens them in the highest manner imaginable.*

*The Author of the Letter rather imitates the fatherly Advice that the meek Moses gave to the People of Israel, who were not concerned in the Rebellion of Corah, Numb. 16. 26. Depart, I pray you, from the Tents of these wicked Men; and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their Sins. This was far from a Threatning to the Children of Israel: It was a Threatning indeed to Corah and his Faction: But the Children of Israel took it right as it was intended, (viz.) a tender Caution to them, to quit the falling Party, and to prevent their sharing in their Punishment. Accordingly the Text says, ver. 27. So they gat up from the Tabernacles of Corah, Dathan and Abiram on every side: And, as it appears, they thereby escaped the Mischief which beset those wicked Men.*

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*In like manner, the Author of the Letter cautions the Dissenters to quit the Party making Sin, and depart from the People that they have too much embraced, that they may avoid the Punishment that will infallibly fall upon those People: This the Party are afraid should influence the Dissenters; and therefore they are labouring to persuade them that they (the Dissenters) are threatned, in this, with Persecution, Oppression and I know not what; the contrary to which is manifest thro' the whole Letter.*

*That the Insolence of the Faction is come to a pitch, and the Measure of their Crimes almost filled up; No body can question: It is most certain, They are ripened for Correction, and have made it as absolutely necessary to the Government to Chastise them, as it is that it should Subsist. None can say but that the Party have pushed the Administration upon the unhappy Choice (viz.) of falling UPON the Faction, or falling UNDER the Faction. The Remisness and Clemency of the Ministry is constructed Fear, Guilt, Impotence, and all that is contemptible, by these Men; and they must be taught to feel the Iron Hands of that Justice, which they have despised because of its Leaden Feet. This is evident from the Nature and Necessity of the publick Affairs: And any one that observes Things may see it; nay, the Party themselves know it, and only flatter themselves with the foolish Notion of their being too Considerable to be chastised, in which they will soon be convinced of their Mistake.*

*But what is all this to the Dissenters? They are not in any Danger of being touch'd in this Case, if they are not found in the Confederacy: And their preventing their own Ruin, by avoiding that Conjunction, is the Counsel given by the Letter; in which the Author has shewn the Dissenters the greatest piece of true Friendship imaginable, and if they take it otherwise, it must be an Infatuation, and such an one as must be dangerous to themselves.*

*The next Quarrel at the Letter, it seems, is, That it charges the Dissenters with great Things, which they are supposed by the Letter to be guilty of, and which they are not justly chargeable with.*

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*This is a Mistake, that has some Ingratitude in it to the Author of the Letter, and the more, because it appears to be wilful, and it is evident that the Fact is not true: For he uses them with such Modesty as that he rather leads them softly by the Hand to charge themselves, than take upon him to charge them, even where he might justly do it.*

*That they have generally, I do not say universally, join'd with the Hot Whigs, they will not deny: That some among them have been Leaders and General Officers in the late Party-Expeditions against their Q U E E N and Country, I need not dispute, for they will not deny it: That they have begun to bring Faction and Party-Politicks into their Pulpits, shewing the Lawfulness of Resisting their Sovereign, under the Shadow of taking Arms against a Tyrant: This they will not deny; and nothing is more sure than that the wiser Men among them not only disown the doing it, but acknowledge it is the high way to make them really suffer as evil Doers, which they are expressly commanded by our Blessed Saviour to avoid.*

*Why then should they prompt us to charge them with Particulars, which they know are too flagrant? It is sufficient that we admit they do not act thus as a Body, and the Guilty only are to be blamed for it: But it lies on them as a Body to disown and declare against the Practice; and therefore the Letter is but too kind to them and too tender of them in these Particulars.*

*These have been the frivolous Cavils at the Letter to the Dissenters: And seeing the Generality of the Dissenters approve of, and appear convinced by the pungent Persuasions of this Letter, I thought it might be of some Use to the Publick, to recommend it in this manner to every serious Protestant to think upon. And let them tell me, if the Dissenters do not take the just Admonition of this Letter, I say let them tell me, who ought to plead for them, who would spare them, and who could pity them?*

*On the Other hand: If they are Wise, if they accept the friendly Caution, if they take due Measures among themselves, it is certain it is neither the Interest, or the Inclination of the Government to hurt them, much less to Injure and Oppress*



*press them. Have they not hitherto enjoy'd all possible Indulgence? Have not the Government forbore to resent their Conduct in Cases which have loudly demanded it? Have they receiv'd any thing from the Government but Kindness and Favour? Nothing can savour more of an Ungrateful Spirit, than to suggest that they are Threatned, and in Danger from, and arm their Minds against an Administration, that has treated them with all the Courtesy and Clemency imaginable. It is hoped, for their own Sakes, they will be cautious how they are drawn into any thing undutiful by a Party of Men, whose Case being desperate, would be glad to embroil us at any one's Expence; and who have once already attempted their Recovery, at the Expence of the Dissenters in the Occasional Bill.*

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# A Letter to the Dissenters.

**N**O Man of Wisdom among you will say you are above Advice; and Charity bids us hope you are not past it. If you reject the Counsel of those that design your Good, your Friends will have the Misfortune to fail in their good Design of Serving you: But the Disaster of not being Serv'd will be your own.

Whoever has the general Good of *Britain* at Heart, will be concern'd when they see any part of its Inhabitants taking Measures to destroy the publick Peace; and whoever is concern'd for the *Dissenters*, and is a Friend to their Interest, will be very sorry to see them under any Infatuations, and would be very glad to contribute, by all Means possible, to awaken them to their own Safety, before they have made their Mischiefs irretrievable by their own inexcusable Weakness.

The *Dissenters*, in former Reigns, were represented to us as Enemies to the Church, of Factions and Seditious Principles, dangerous to Government and to Monarchy, and Enemies to *Cesar*, and had much Trouble given them on those Accounts: When it was thus with them, they never fail'd to protest their Innocence, their Loyalty to the Government, their Zeal for the Preservation of the Person of the King; and declar'd they desir'd nothing but the Liberty of their Consciences, and of Worshipping God after their own Manner; and that this being granted them, they would be fully satisfied, and testify by their Behaviour, that all they desir'd of the Government was (using their own Words) *To live peaceably and quietly under it in all Godliness and Honesty*. They cannot reasonably expect these Professions of theirs, which had so much Influence on their new Privileges, can now be forgotten: And it highly concerns them to behave so under the Liberty they have obtained, as that the *Church of England* should have no Reason to reproach them with the Immorality of those Protestations, or to believe that they were not sincere.

Moderate Men, who were inclined to Peace, gave easy Credit to these Protestations and were thereby moved to acquiesce at that time in the Government's giving Liberty of Worship to the *Dissenters*, hoping by that means to have the Sincerity of those Professions testified by a quiet and peaceable Behaviour: And the whole Body of the Church of *England*, at the time of the Revolution, willingly join'd in taking off the Edge of Penal Laws, so far as it concern'd the *Dissenters*, exempting them by Act of Parliament from the Restraints and Penalties which they were subject to on account of their Religious Worship, and allowing them by legal Authority that Liberty of Worship and Freedom of Meeting and Assembling for the Service of God, which they had so often publicly affirmed to be the Sum of their Desires!

It was expected by all those who wished well to the *Dissenters*, that as on the one Hand they (the *Dissenters*) had received frequent and repeated Assurances from the Throne, of the Satisfaction their Sovereign took in having laid such great Obligations upon them to be Faithful, Loyal, and Zealous for the Publick Good; so, on the other Hand, they would express upon all Occasions the Sense they had upon them of the Obligation, and would convince not their Sovereign only, but the

Church of *England* also; that the Liberty so readily and from such good Principles granted to *Dissenters*, was not misplaced or given to a People who did not know how to use it; that they would now make good what they had always challenged to be their Character, and what they had professed to be their utmost Desire, (*viz.*) *To live peaceable and quiet Lives, &c.*

To encourage them to do this, it has been the constant Study of Her present Majesty, ever since Her Accession to the Throne, to remove all the Causes of Jealousy and Uneasiness from the *Dissenters*, as to their said Tolerations, &c. and even to check the real Designs of any who attempted to put Restraints upon them. And altho' Occasional Conformity was become too much the Practice of the *Dissenters* (an unjustifiable Thing even in the Judgment of the most Conscientious among themselves) and in process of time grew up to such a height as to enervate the Laws, became Scandalous to Religion, and Matter of Jealousy and Uneasiness to the Church; yet Her Majesty on several Occasions discouraged the Attempts made to suppress it, profess'd frequently from the Throne Her Resolution to preserve the aforesaid Toleration and Exemption inviolable, and, as far as in Her lay, prevented the passing a Law, even against the Occasional Conformity, till the united Voice of Her People, and even of those whom the *Dissenters* themselves own'd for their particular Protectors, claim'd it of Her Majesty in a Parliamentary way, as absolutely necessary for the Publick Safety, and as a Thing so Essential to the National Good, as that there was not a Voice in either House against it.

After this, it must be very surprizing if we should find the *Dissenters* either fail in the Performance of those Engagements, or of their Duty and Gratitude to their Sovereign, who has in so singular a manner granted them Her Favour and Protection: It must turn upon the *Dissenters* extremely to their Disadvantage, if it shall be found that notwithstanding their aforesaid frequent Protestations of their Innocence, and of their being free from the aforesaid Charge of being Factious and Seditious, either by Principle or Inclination, they now actually appear siding and joining with an enraged disaffected Party and Faction, who having evil and unwarrantable Designs in view, have endeavoured to ensnare and draw in the *Dissenters* to take part with them in the most unjust and undutiful Behaviour to their Sovereign, and to oppose the most just and unexceptionable Measures of Her Government; on pretence of Civil Grievances, which have no other Foundation than in the Discontents of certain Statesmen, whom Her Majesty, according to Her undisputed Right and legal Authority, has thought fit to dismiss from their Employments: And, which would be still more wonderful, to see them join in the most provoking Insults, and the most undutiful Treatment of Her Majesty's Person, as well as of Her Government, and this with such naked and unguarded Conduct, as if they coveted to have it known that the *Dissenters*, casting off all Duty and Respect to Her Majesty, had openly professed a Disaffection to the Person and Government of their Prince, who, on the other Hand, by all possible Clemency and Beneficence had, as is above-noted, endeavoured in the highest manner to engage and oblige them.

If these Things are justly laid to the Charge of the *Dissenters*, and should be prov'd upon them, it must necessarily lay them open to very just Reflections. And albeit this Letter, which is design'd meekly to admonish and persuade them, shall not accuse them of the Facts; nevertheless it must in a friendly manner acquaint them that these Things are laid to their Charge, with several Aggravations, which are not repeated here, because the Design is not to burthen them with a Recapitulation of Crimes,



Crimes, but rather to lead them faithfully by the Hand to such Measures as may conduce to their own Safety, Honour and Peace.

Yet we must not omit to let them understand, that there is one Aggravation of their Conduct insisted on by those who now blame them, (*viz.*) That they seem to be concern'd lest we should say they are drawn in, and unwarily ensnared in their Engagements with the *Faction* or Party beforemention'd; but that, on the contrary, they have made their Conjunction with them in an extraordinary manner, particularly in that they submitted quietly to be made a Sacrifice in their Religious Concerns by that same Party, whom we alledge they so affectionately espouse, rather than lose the Opportunity which they were made to believe would thereby be put into their Hands, to overthrow the Persons into whose Hands Her Majesty had thought fit to entrust the Administration of the Publick Affairs: And that notwithstanding they have been actually so Sacrificed by the said Party, yet such has been the eager Desire of the *Dissenters* to promote and to support the said Opposition to Her Majesty, that they still continue to embrace and embark with the very Persons who so Sacrificed them and their Interest as *Dissenters*; Testifying thereby, that they were more zealous for carrying on a Faction in the Civil Government, than for enjoying or preserving their Religious Liberties, which, as is said before, they had appeared so much concern'd about in former Times.

These Occasions presenting, and a Charge of such a Nature lying against the greatest part of the *Dissenters*, it is offer'd in a friendly manner to advise and expostulate with them, with respect to their present Conduct, and their future Interest, that they may be prevail'd with to consider, *before it be too late*, what is the true State of their Case; and not precipitate themselves and their Innocent Posterity into that Ruin, which, if they do not immediately alter their Behaviour, must be inevitable to Both.

Yet ere we proceed to this Expostulation, and in order to clear the way from just Exceptions, it is needful to explain the meaning of the Words **FACTION** and **PARTY**, as they are made use of in this *Letter*. The Division of the People into *Whig* and *Tory* has been too long, and the Party the *Dissenters* have been known to adhere to, is too Publick to have any Charge lie against them now for being *Whigs*: Nor shall this *Letter* go about to persuade them to be otherwise. *Whig* and *Tory* are not the Species of the present Parties; but the Division lies between the New Ministry and the Old, and their respective Dependencies: And we find, that as there are many *Tories* who are against the present Ministry in several Things, as Interests and Prospects guide them; so, many of those who have always distinguish'd themselves as *Whigs*, and continue to be so; nay, many *Dissenters*, and who still remain so in their Principles, many who have always professed themselves *Whigs*, as to Government, the Revolution, the Succession, Liberty and Property, and the like Things, the Heads of former Disputes, are entirely in the Interest of the present Ministry. For this reason, the Opposers of the present Administration are not treated as *Whigs*, or *Tories*; being composed of Both; but are stiled throughout this *Letter* a **FACTION**, and most justly so, because they apparently act contrary to the Duty, Faith and Allegiance of Subjects, in opposition to the peaceable, just and gentle Government of their Sovereign Prince. As such then. let an impartial View be taken of the State of Things.

It cannot reasonably be expected that the Heat and Fury of the Parties now contending can continue long, as it now stands. Let any reasonable

sonable Person cast his Eye upon publick Affairs, and it will immediately occur to him, that no Government can be suppos'd long to bear being insulted and treated as we see now practis'd by the said **FACTION**, in defiance of legal Authority, in contempt of the Majesty of the Throne, and of the Justice of the Executive Power. For any one to tell the *Dissenters* that the **QUEEN**, or the Government do not see, or seeing do not resent such Behaviour, would be to compliment them at the expence of Her Majesty's Understanding, or to flatter them at the expence of their own. It cannot then be imagin'd that the Government will always sit still and suffer the Indignities, the Reproaches, and the scandalous Treatment which it now bears with. The Clemency of the **QUEEN**, and the Forbearance and Moderation of a Ministry, are a Blessing to a Nation, when practis'd in their due Measure, but become Criminal to themselves, and Injurious to the publick Safety, when they suffer themselves to be so insulted, as to bring Authority it self into Contempt.

The publick Embarrassments of the War, out of which the *Faction* first hoped the Ministry could never extricate themselves, and then reproached them for having done it, notwithstanding the popular Clamour and Opposition made to hinder it, may have caused the said Ministry to bear with all the lesser Inconveniencies of our Home-disorders: But is it not manifest that this Forbearance has so far been misimprov'd at Home, as to bring Things to this *Crisis*, that now the Government must think of Measures to crush and suppress Tumult and Faction; or resolve quietly and cowardly to sink under it, and fall a Sacrifice to a merciless, enraged Party.

The *Dissenters*, notwithstanding the smooth Words made use of by their new Friends to persuade them, or the Menaces they use against the **QUEEN** and Her Ministers, cannot be so weak to think that Her Majesty, and the Ministry under Her, after having with a surprizing Success gone thro' the first Difficulties of this Matter, and having brought the publick Affairs so near a happy Settlement, can want Power, or are at a Loss for the proper Measures to subdue the Remains of a discontented Party; a Party, who by the effectual Disappointment of all their Measures, are dwindled and sunk into a disconcerted Rabble, a meer confused, disunited and dispersed Mob; whose Rage now is vented in reviling of Persons, and in a Fury that merits Correction, but is not capable of giving any just Apprehension to those it is pointed against.

The *Dissenters* cannot be so weak to think that they are able to support this *Faction*, and by joining with them to do any thing but partake of their Punishment. Are the *Dissenters* strong enough to support a Faction against their Sovereign! It would be the greatest Injury in the World to the *Dissenters*, for any Man to suggest such a thing of them: Because it would of consequence arm the Government against the *Dissenters* in general, and make it necessary to fall upon the *Dissenters* as a Body, in order thereby, *first*, to satisfy the *Dissenters* that the Party they are join'd with cannot be able to answer their Expectation, *and then* to satisfy the Party that the Interest of the *Dissenters* is not able to support them. If then the *Dissenters* cannot promise to support this Party, why should they desire to fall with them? Why should the *Dissenters* hazard the Privileges, Liberty and Safety, which they now enjoy under a mild and just Administration, and run into an Adventure, in which, if they miscarry, they alone will be Losers.

It is manifest the Hazard is not equal: The *Faction* are but where they were, if their Attempts fail. Their Arguments are of kin to those of the Lepers of *Samaria*: As they now are, they are undone, outed of Places, of

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Employments, Disgraced and Dismissed. If they succeed in the Attacks they make upon the Ministry, they flatter themselves, *tho' vainly too*, they may come in again: If they miscarry, they are but undone, and can fall no lower; and it is time enough to be quiet, when all Efforts to recover are tried, and prove in vain.

But it is not thus with the *Dissenters*: They enjoy much, possess great Privileges, which may depend much upon the Favour and Clemency of the Government they live under, and which they ought not to run the Hazard of forfeiting; nay, it would be Madness in them to run the Hazard of forfeiting them. It is evident, that the *Dissenters* can expect no greater Privileges or Advantages than they now enjoy, what Party soever reigns. What have the *Dissenters* to do with Parties in the Government? It is as clear as the Light, which Party soever succeeds, they can never be better in their Religious Concerns than they are. Their Case is the Reverse of the other: The *Dissenters* are well, and had been better but for the *Occasional Bill*, which this very Party brought upon them: If they are quiet and sit still, they are safe, and are sure to keep what they have; if they join with those People, they have only this Circumstance before them, (*viz.*) That if they succeed, they cannot be better; and if they fail, they may be undone.

It is then a most mysterious Folly in the *Dissenters* to push themselves into this Broil. The *Faction* know the Force of this Argument; and to evade it, would fain draw the *Dissenters* in to suppose their Civil Rights are in Danger, and to bring them, by a certain Thing which they mistakenly call a *publick Spirit*, to hazard their Religious Liberty for the securing their Civil Liberty. This is a Heresy in Politicks not heard of before, and is the Reverse of all Christian Duty. It has been often practised by Christians, and is deservedly applauded by good Men, that all Civil Liberties, Properties and Privileges should be hazarded, nay lost and relinquish'd, to preserve Religious Liberties; but the other Part was never, as I read of, allow'd by any Christians in the World, till the modern Christianity of the present Parties among us have recommended it.

The next Evasion made use of, to draw in the *Dissenters* to take part in the present Quarrel of a *Faction* as above, is, That our Constitution being in Danger, they should distinguish themselves, and stand in a double Capacity of Interest, (*viz.*) as *Britons* on one Hand, and as *Dissenters* on the other.

This is such an Evasion as is usual with the Authors of Tumult and Sedition, and is something of kin to that former Distinction of Fighting against the *Person* of the King, but not against the *Authority* of the King; and as to the *Dissenters*, is something like that Distinction which the *Dutch* are said to have made in *Japan*, between *Christians* and *Hollanders*.

Before the *Dissenters* can distinguish themselves thus, they must assign some Reason, as *Britons*, why they should oppose their Sovereign; not as *Dissenters*: They must charge Her Administration with some illegal arbitrary Thing, and then tell us why they appear as a Body of *Dissenters* in a Case which, if it were true, they ought to appear as *Britons* meerly, and in Conjunction with the Church only, and in Defence of the Constitution; not as *Dissenters*, with a Party against a Government under whom the Constitution remains entire and unbroken, and against whom they cannot alledge the least Breach of the Laws of Government.

We have not yet seen wherein they so much as pretend to charge the Government or the Ministry with the Breach of the Constitution, with dispensing Power, arbitrary Government, or suspending the Execution of the Law, except only in delaying to punish the most insolent Treat-

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ment that ever any Government suffered in this Nation, till the Guilty presume upon that criminal Clemency, and haughtily suggest it to be the Effect of Fear.

We have not yet seen them Impeach their Prince of Tyranny or arbitrary Government, or of any Breach of Her Royal Duty; and we may adventure to say they cannot, except the Sin of too much Mercy, which they may find a time to repent the Abuse of, and to know that tho' it has gone far, yet it will have an End, and may be provoked beyond the Power of longer Forbearing.

We have not seen them charge the Ministry with Transgressing the Bounds of their Duty, or of the Laws, except in Generals, which is unjust and unfair. Why do they not tell the People what the Crimes are which the Administration is charged with, and what the Punishments which the Laws have made their due? What can they impeach the Ministry of? Where is the Treasure wasted, the Taxes misapply'd, the Funds interrupted, the Families enriched out of the publick Spoils? Is it possible that all this Violence can be shewn against the Ministry, and no Impeachment drawn up! No Rapine, no Treason, no Misuse of Power laid to their Charge! All the Crime we yet hear of, is, That they are Ministers of State, and that others, who desire to be in their Places, are not so: To re-obtain which, they would raise all the Confusions in their Country that were possible, and divide us into Factions and Parties, as if the Safety of the Nation depended not upon the Administration it self, but the Persons who are employ'd in it. And what have the *Dissenters* to do in this? Of what essential Moment is it to them whom the Queen employs in the Administration, so the Persons employ'd guide the State by legal Methods according to the Constitution? Is this of Concern enough to the *Dissenters*, that they should embroil themselves with the Government about it, and hazard all their Religious Advantages, which now they enjoy, in the private Quarrel of a Faction? Unaccountable Folly! What will they say to their Children after them, if it should appear that on such Accounts as these, and with such Views, and to carry on such Designs, they lose the Religious Liberty they enjoy'd, and oblig'd the Government to abridge and cut them short for the mere necessary Preservation of the publick Peace?

How will this for ever open the Mouths of the *Dissenters* Enemies against them, and cause them to say, That all that had been formerly said of them was true, viz. of their being a turbulent unpeaceable People, Enemies to Government, restless under Restraint, that sought not so much the Liberty of their Religion as a Liberty from all Government; that, if they were tolerated in the Exercise of their Worship, would still remain Dissatisfied, Factious and Uneasy; be ever disturbing the Repose of the State, and on all Occasions join with those that should disturb it. What can the *Dissenters* have to say, to vindicate themselves from that Calumny, unless they consider it in time, and alter their present Conduct?

Formerly, as is said, they alledg'd that all was false which was said against them of this kind; that they desir'd only Liberty of Religion, were harmless, inoffensive People, faithful to the Government, and cheerfully Obedient to the Laws, seeking only the Ease of their Consciences in Matters purely Religious; that in the Affair of the Revolution, they only join'd with the Church in resisting arbitrary Government, and endeavouring to maintain the Laws and Constitution, the natural Rights of *Englishmen*, and the like; and there being no immediate Charge against them to the contrary, many People gave Credit to them in this Matter: But now, when the Laws are uninvaded, the Constitution en-

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fire and unbroken, no Encroachments made on Liberty, no Violence on Property, no Oppression, no Injustice offer'd them, their Religious Liberties granted them to their full Satisfaction, nay their Schools and Seminaries allow'd them, tho' by Law they may and ought to be suppress'd; for them to bandy against the Government now! for them to abett a restless Faction, and fall in with a Sett of Malecontents to embroil and enflame the People now! for them to insult the Queen and the Ministry now! What can be said for this, but that it is the mere Essence and Spirit of Sedition? And what can be the Consequence, but that it will oblige the Government to teach them their own Interest by Methods more mortifying than they otherwise intended to do, and to take from them the Power of doing the Mischief they seem to have Will to bring to pass?

That the Government have Power to do this, and that too many Ways are left to humble the *Dissenters*, it would be lost time to contend about; they cannot be so ignorant as not to know it.

But before I come to mention that Part, it will be needful to examine a little the farther Views and Prospects, upon which the Party we speak of have drawn the *Dissenters* to act with them in these Tumults and Disorders, and what it is that the *Dissenters* can rationally propose to themselves in the greatest Success of the Faction they are siding with. For it cannot be imagin'd of the *Dissenters*, but that, like all reasonable Creatures, they propose some End to themselves in every Action before they engage in it, much more in Actions of such Consequence as taking Sides in the *Brouillerie* of the State: They must then have some rational Views to justify their Actions to themselves, or at least some Pretences of rational Views. Let us enquire, as far as we have Light into them, what they are.

The main Pretence with which the Party have for a long time alarm'd the *Dissenters*, is, the Danger of the *Pretender*, and the Interest they have in the Protestant Successor. How this can have obtain'd so far upon Men of a peaceable Disposition, as Charity bids us suppose the *Dissenters* to be, is mysteriously strange; the utmost Reason that has yet been given for that Jealousy, having been founded on mere Suggestion, malicious Cavils, and the bold Allegations of partial and prejudiced Men, without any real Ground or sufficient Evidence of Fact against any one Person in the Administration. Not one Step has been taken, either by the Queen or Her Ministers of State, towards weakning the Protestant Succession, or encouraging the *Pretender*, unless renewing Laws to enforce the Abjuring the *Pretender* by Name, obliging the *French King* to Renounce him, and to engage on the Faith and Honour of a King, for himself and his Posterity, never to aid, assist, or encourage him to attempt us, and in the mean time to expel him from this Court, and from his Dominions; and to acknowledge the Title of the House of *Hanover*; I say, unless these are to be esteem'd as Grounds of Suspicion and Encouragements of the *Pretender*.

It might be enquir'd here, Why is the *Protestant Succession* endeavour'd to be made the immediate Strife? The QUEEN (God be praised) notwithstanding a thousand scandalous Reports, is in a good state of Health, and gives no room to make any thing of the Succession our immediate Concern, except its future Certainty; and as to the future Security and Certainty of the *Hanover Succession*, what more can be done? The Laws have Establish'd it, the QUEEN has declar'd for it, the Ministry have not done the least thing in prejudice of it; the mentioning it then can be with no View but to keep the People alarm'd and uneasy; seeing nothing can be desir'd, even by the House of *Hanover* themselves, to make their



Succession safe, more than is already done in a Legal and Parliamentary way.

But these People injure the House of *Hanover*, and the Succession it self, in their Conduct, by Threats of what shall be done to Persons and Parties, when the *Hanover* Succession takes place: It were to be wish'd those who are true Friends to the *Hanover* Succession, would be more wary in what they say and do of this kind, lest they ignorantly assist a *Jacobite* Interest by those very Steps which they think contribute to the establishing the Line of *Hanover*. Were the Princes of the House of *Hanover* to see how they are, on the most frivolous Occasions, thrown in the Faces of the most Loyal Subjects the QUEEN has; how the aforesaid *Faction* Bullies the People with the *Hanover* Succession, and threatens the Ministry and all their Friends with the Resentment of the Successor: They would shew their Displeasure at it, and tell them plainly that this is weakning, not strengthening their Interest, by making them Terrible to the Nation they are to Govern; filling the Minds of the People with the Apprehensions of what Treatment they shall meet with from the House of *Hanover*, which tends to arm their Minds with Fear of, and consequently an Aversion to the Person of the Successor, and, by the same Rule, to the Succession it self. Do these People think that the House of *Hanover* so ill understand the Policy of Government, as to come over hither prepar'd to revenge the Quarrel of a *Faction*? To espouse Parties, and to enter into the Resentments of a few enraged Men against the rest of the Nation, who are to be equally their Subjects, and who will have an equal Claim to their Favour and Protection?

What inconceivable Injury do these People do to the *Protestant Successor*! To endeavour to make him a Terror to any of those who are to be his Subjects! To threaten us beforehand with the Resentment of that Power, which it is expected we should all concur to bring in, and give up the Government to! It also merits some Enquiry to know Who they are, which this Resentment is threatned against.

Are they not those whom the QUEEN Administers Her Government by? Whom Her Majesty declares worthy of Her Favour, and fit to place the Royal Authority with? Would these Men persuade us then, that the *Protestant Successor* shall so requite the QUEEN for all that Concern shew'd by Her Majesty to establish the Crown in their Family, by the Treaty of Union, and many other ways, as to fall immediately upon the very Persons who assisted Her Majesty in preserving the Succession of the Crown to them entire? Is not this an irreparable Injury to the *Protestant Successor*? An Injustice he cannot but be sensible of and resent? Is it not the only way to weaken, and finally to ruin the Succession it self; and, as above, to make the *Protestant Successor* the Terror, not the Desire of Great Britain?

In the next place, the *Dissenters* would do well to consider what they in particular have to expect from the *Protestant Successor*. Can they expect more than they have? Will the *Protestant Successor* favour them more, and do more for them than the QUEEN has done? Of what sort can that Favour be? Can they hope he will take off the *Occasional Bill* lately brought on by their own Treacherous Friends? Or will he attempt to remove the TEST, and promiscuously admit them into Places, &c? If this were really their Expectation, yet it would savour of more Honesty than Discretion to say so: For it would be an irreparable Injury to the *Protestant Successor* to make that Expectation be receiv'd by the People; it would be such a Handle to the *Presender* to take hold of, as nothing could be equal to it, and would alarm the Church of England against the Succession



*cession* of *Hanover*, as being dangerous to their Safety and to the very Constitution of the Church. And thus you would injure the *Succession* which you appear so zealously to espouse.

What then can it be which should embark the *Dissenters* in the present Quarrel of Parties? In which, if they knew or could discern their own Interest, they would at least be Neuters; knowing that they must be Losers by taking part in the Strife, which Side soever prevails; and that they are never courted, but with a Design to be used like *David's* Heifers, first to draw the Cart, and then to be burnt with the Wood of it. If then they had a Sense not of their Obligation to their Sovereign only, but of their own Civil and Religious Interests, they would from the Beginning have appear'd against these Things, by which they would have prevented the Danger of having the Government oppress'd by a *Faction*, and the Necessity of the Ministry taking Measures, and using Hands which they had no Desire or Design to have taken or used; from which Measures they never yet could see a safe Door of Retreat, nor ever can, till the Edge of *Faction* and *Sedition* is more effectually taken off, and the Rage of *Parties* abated.

Let the *Dissenters* then ask themselves what particular Views are proposed to them at this time, for which they, as *Dissenters*, ought to meddle or embark themselves with any Party? What have the *Dissenters* to do, as *Dissenters*, in the Broils about who is or is not employ'd in the State? Is it not Interest of Persons, and Interest of Parties in the publick Management that is the Quarrel? What is the Question to them? And moreover seeing which Side soever prevails, the *Dissenters* are sure to have no share in the Management; Why should they have a share in the Hazard?

In embarking with these Men, the *Dissenters* can have no hope but in the Success of those they embark with: If that Success comes, they are under foot still, nay, the *Faction* dare not say they will relieve the *Dissenters*, if they should obtain the Victory; they dare not promise the *Dissenters* the least Favour, or to redress the least of their Grievances. To say that they but intend it, would be to tell the *Church Party* that they will lessen the Security made by the Law for its Preservation; and let in the *Dissenters* to such a share of Power as would be dangerous to the Church: Nay, on the contrary, does not a Noble Lord in a late Pamphlet, said to be of his Writing, publicly recommend the present Discontented Party as the *Church's* true and only Friends, because they have at THIS TIME set their Foot upon the *Dissenters*, and for ever made them safe from giving the *Church* any Uneasiness? Can they then who recommend themselves by your Oppression, give you hope of Recovery by their Success? As they have now occasionally used you, they are Traitors to the Confidence you have placed in them; and if they should restore you, they must be as Treacherous to the *Church*, whom they court, and to whom they at this time plead the Merit of your Destruction.

So that neither the *Hanover* Succession, nor the Success or Restoration of the Party you espouse, can ever retrieve your Case. On the other Hand, if the *Faction* miscarries, as the Nation hopes, and honest Men pray, you have nothing to hope for, as *Dissenters*, but what must be founded in the Mercy and Clemency of Her Majesty, after the greatest Prevarications you are able to be guilty of; who tho' not inclin'd to Severity, may see Cause in your Conduct to prevent your offering the like again, and may teach you your Duty at the expence of that Liberty, which you will then most justly forfeit to the Government.

The Sum therefore of this part of the Advice to the *Dissenters*, is, That they would be so Wise, and so behave themselves, as not to make it necessary

cessary to the Government to resent their Conduct, and to oblige the Executive Power, when they correct a Seditious Party, as they must quickly do, to lend the *Dissenters* a Lash to let them know their Duty, and make them taste what they might justly expect a greater share of.

Why also should the *Dissenters*, who are a great tho' not a powerful Body in the Nation, suffer themselves to be made Tools of a Party? Are they not sure to be laid by, and cast away by that very Party that use them, as soon as the Dirty Work they are employ'd in, is over; and sure to be worn out and ruin'd, if that dirty Work should not succeed? When will the *Dissenters* learn to be Wise to their own Peace, and not meddle with Contention, which does not belong to them, which *Solomon* says, *is like one that takes a Wolf by the Ears?*

It should seem that in these Things, the Interest of the *Dissenters* receives some Prejudice from the Influence their Passion for a Party has upon their Judgment; otherwise they would consider some such Things as these:

Why should the *Dissenters* distinguish themselves by their Animosity to the present Administration? Why enter into the Resentments of a few Men, who have given so many Testimonies that the want of Power to aggrandize themselves is their only Dissatisfaction?

Why should the *Dissenters* covet to be ill with their Sovereign; and why signalize their Opposition to their Prince in the Legal Use of Her unquestion'd Prerogative?

Why should the *Dissenters* oblige the Government to take the first Occasion to lay their Hands upon them, and to single them out as a People whom it is necessary to humble for the publick Safety?

Are the *Dissenters* under no particular Obligations to the QUEEN as they are *Dissenters*?

Do the *Dissenters* enjoy no Advantages more than the Law has provided for, and for which they are particularly indebted to the Favour of the QUEEN?

Is it no way in the QUEEN's Power to incommode them or straiten them, or to make them uneasy as *Dissenters*?

Can the Government abridge them of nothing? Is the QUEEN's Protection of them from Encroachments and Insults of several kinds, of no Value to them?

Are they so sure of pushing the present Heats to the Overthrow of the present Ministry, that they cannot fail? And are they sure they shall lose nothing by the Miscarriage?

If they are oblig'd to the Favour and Protection of the QUEEN for many Things, what Praise do they seek in the Title of *Ungrateful*, that they should come so much into the Mode? And, which is more than all,

Are they sure, there will never be a Parliament that will resent an undutiful and ungrateful Behaviour to their Sovereign?

Nay, Is not even the Toleration it self in the Hands of the Parliament, and as much at the Mercy of the *High-Church*, who are push'd at in all these Intrigues, as even themselves can desire?

These Things may be worth the present Consideration of the *Dissenters*; and questionless would they consider them sedately, they would see some Weight in them, and see some Ground to alter their present Conduct, and to think their Engagements with their new Friends a more dangerous Step to them than at present they are aware of.

From their Conduct as to their Sovereign, and the Administration of publick Affairs, come we to speak of their Proceeding as to particular Persons. One would think Prudence should move the *Dissenters* to take  
Care,



Care, in falling in with the Party aforesaid, as to particular Persons. What Interest, or what Advantage can it be to the *Dissenters*, to make themselves new Enemies? And especially what can it avail them to force Men to be their Enemies who would not be so? Nay, who have always shewn themselves friendly to their Interest, however oblig'd by their Conduct not to be so to their Persons? Is it Prudence in the *Dissenters*, as such, to place their only Safety and Ease in the Overthrow of this or that Person or Party? Does it not, by Consequence, oblige those Persons or Parties to face upon them, and to see that on the contrary their Safety consists in the Ruin and Overthrow of the *Dissenters*? And what Necessity are the *Dissenters* in, of coming into such a Circumstance, especially where the Victory is so doubtful, and the Mischief in case of a Miscarriage so certain?

It is worthy the *Dissenters* Observation, That however they may have been oppress'd for private Ends not so much concerning themselves, and often perhaps with no immediate Design to destroy them; yet they have never been courted by any Party, but with a clear and open Design to ruin and suppress them. And not to go too far back in History to prove this, the *Dissenters* having had the Fate not to be much courted at any time, the first Instance we meet with of this, is recent in Memory; viz. in the Time of the late King James II. His Caressing the *Dissenters* had in it these Two remarkable Circumstances; first, that it was known he did not begin it, till he had first tried all possible Methods with the Church, and twice offered to make a Sacrifice of all the *Dissenters* in the Kingdom to them, if they would have come into his Measures; when failing in his Design on that side, and finding them steady to the Constitution, he faced about to the *Dissenters*, and offered them a like Sacrifice of the Church; hoping by gratifying their Revenge to gain their Help in his Design of mastering the Laws, breaking in upon the Constitution, ruining the Church and thereby the Protestant Religion, and at last (mighty Favour!) the *Dissenters* themselves. Then it was that the *Dissenters* were awaken'd by an excellent Tract under the same Title of this, viz. *A Letter to a Dissenter*, written by a Noble Author who was an eminent Tory, tho' a Friend to the Constitution and to the Protestant Interest, (for such are consistent) viz. the late Marquis of Halifax.

How far the *Dissenters* were drawn into that Snare, I would have chosen to see buried in the Merit of their After-Conduct in the Revolution, were it not that I see them now drawn into the like Evil with so much more Art, but with a View equally fatal to themselves; a Plot against the very Essence of their Liberty as *Dissenters*, and the more likely to succeed, because they are brought to that Condition as to see and know, that they are design'd to be an Oblation or Peace-offering for their Party to the Tories or High-Church, whenever a Treaty of Reconciliation shall commence; and yet that they are contented to be so, and to espouse the Faction at that Price.

To what a strange Infatuation are the *Dissenters* brought! Who, altho' under the mild and merciful Administration of the present Queen they enjoy more Liberty than the Laws direct, and are protected from many Insults which they would be expos'd to, if Her Majesty thought fit to let them know their true Circumstances; yet are willing to appear with a Party who have made the Oppression of the *Dissenters* the express Condition of their being restored! Was ever any Infatuation like this! What can be said in Abatement for such Conduct, but must reflect upon the very Understandings of the People we speak of, except we should, to complement the Senses of the *Dissenters*, give up their Morals, and declare them  
bent



bent upon Rebellion and the Ruin of their Country ; Things, which it is very difficult to bring our Charity to suspect them of.

It seems the Party who have carried the Delusions of the *Dissenters* to such a Length, have done it by possessing them with a degree of Contempt, first of the Queen's Person, and then of Her Power. It is not hard to impose upon the Judgment of a People in small Matters, when they have done it in greater : When a Breach is made upon our Duty and Affection to our Prince, it follows that we condemn what we hate, and that we are easy to be brought off from our Fear of that Power, which we are prevail'd upon not to love.

It is very strange that the *Dissenters* should be prevail'd upon in either of these, and perhaps the Fact may be denied in their Behalf. It were sincerely to be wished that it were not true : And so tenderly shall the *Dissenters* be handled in that Case in this *Letter*, that I shall choose rather to say, it has been attempted, and they have been pressed and persuaded to condemn the Resentments of the Government, than that they have been prevail'd upon actually to do so.

But it may be as proper to use some Arguments with them to shew the Weakness of this Delusion, be the Matter of Fact one way or other, (*viz.*) whether they have been prevail'd upon, or have only been persuaded and attempted : In the one Case it is needful to prevent their Mistakes ; in the other to open their Eyes, and assist them to retrieve it before it be too late to look back.

Let them reflect then, In what can their Contempt of the present Power serve their Interest ? And upon what can it depend ?

The Life of Her present Majesty is the chief Thing that I have observed the Party made use of, to habituate this Contempt among the People. I have that Charity for the *Dissenters*, as to believe, however they may have heard this Argument made use of, though some of them may have been weak enough to restrain their open Dislike of it ; yet their secret Thoughts have resented it with a just Horror. It is not in the Constitution of a *Dissenter*, as such, to entertain Thoughts so unchristian, so unnatural ; and whatever the Delusion may have been, no Protestant *Dissenter* can calmly and sedately say, that he wishes the Death of Her present Majesty, but his Conscience must admit some Horror, and reproach him in a manner that cannot be quietly borne.

For this Reason, albeit some have been drawn in to drink that Unchristian, Bloody, and Treasonable Health, which now with an unheard-of Impudence is made the Test of the present Faction, (*viz.*) *To send the House of Hanover speedily to the Throne* ; nevertheless, I do not charge it upon the *Dissenters* as a Body, but I heartily wish every *Dissenter* would, for their own sakes, and for the Credit of Religion which they profess, or else cannot be rightly called *Dissenters* ; I say, that they would make it a particular Mark of a *Dissenter*, to declare their Abhorrence of a Thing every way so Criminal, seeing it is no less than Cursing the Q——n, and drinking Her Confusion as a Q——n, (*viz.*) That She would either speedily Dye, or speedily be Deposed.

As the Case now stands, He cannot wish well to this Island, who does not wish the Protestant Succession, as now established by Parliament, may in God's due time take place, that the next Heir of the House of *Hanover* being Protestant may quietly and peaceably succeed : But he is a Traitor to his Country, a Murderer of the Q——n, an Enemy to the publick Peace, and an ungrateful Subject to an obliging merciful Prince, that can wish even *that* Succession should take place, till the Course of God's Providence has removed Her Majesty by the Hand of Nature.

But

But not to mention that Time which every true Subject thinks of with Regret, and desires to place as remote as possible, What is the Argument for which this horrid Spirit possesses us? Is it more or less than this, That they wish the Q---n were dead, only that the Ministry might be changed? Is not this Sedition in the Abstract? Is not wishing the Q---n dead, murdering the Q---n? Is not wishing Her Majesty Deposed, an intentional Rebellion, and a Deposing the Q---n? Suppose this Hellish Thought gratified! Heaven guard Her Majesty from the very Suggestion! It is a kind of Treason but to suppose it! But what would this avail the Party? Are they assured this would answer that Part of the Design, and bring us to a Change of Hands in the Administration? These Men are not aware of the Consequence of that Suggestion. Can you serve the Interest of the *Pretender* more, than by promoting a general Opinion, that when the House of *Hanover* comes in, the Successor will immediately restore the Whigs, and turn out the present Ministry? For my part, I dare not entertain the Thought, for the Horror of its Consequences; for either way, for ought I see, we are to be ruin'd.

If we should say, the Successor will employ the present Ministry, we arm all the aforesaid Faction against the Protestant Succession: For, if they would be glad the Q---n were dead, rather than the Old Ministry should not come in ( the Truth of which they have Folly enough not to deny ) with much more Charity may we suppose, they had rather the *Hanover* House should not succeed than that the Old Ministry should not come in; and consequently they would even join the *Pretender* to bring in the Old Ministry, if there were no other way. Nor are they for the Protestant Succession it self, but on a Presumption, that when they come to succeed, they shall immediately change Hands, and take them into the Administration.

On the other Hand, if we say the Successor shall depose the present Administration, and overthrow the *High-Church* Interest, then we make necessary the *High-Church's* being Enemies to the *Protestant Succession* of *Hanover*, and justify them in being so from your own Practice. It is not so long since the present Discontented People for the same Reason, (*viz.*) *Their being out of Place*, were equally Discontented at the late Ministry, and made no scruple to Confederate with the *Pretender's* Party here, against the very Person of the late Lord Treasurer G-----, and the Duke of *Marlborough*: The Truth of which needs not to be quoted from printed Relations, seeing there are living Witnesses sufficient to put it past the Possibility of being Contradicted. And nothing brought them off from that Confederacy, but the taking them into the Administration, after which all the Complaints of that Administration ceased, they became Advocates of the very Mismanagement they had accused the Ministry of, and never concerned themselves to rectify one of those Things, which they had called Abuses before.

Thus it is a Dilemma they cannot remove, and can give no rational Answer to, whether the Successor shall change the Ministry, when he comes to the Crown, or no? *If he should not*, as there is very good Ground to believe from the Prudence, Wisdom and Judgment of the Person we expect to Succeed, what strange Excesses and ungrounded Follies do these Men run into, who carry their Heats to such a height, with a View which they have no sufficient Ground to expect shall be answered; although the Treasonable Horrid Suggestion of the Demise of the present QUEEN were now to happen.

But



But not to enter into the Follies of the *Malecontents*, which is not the Design of this *Letter*, any farther than it appears the *Dissenters* are engaged in them: It is the Wish of every moderate Christian, who aims at the publick Quiet, that the *Dissenters* would take some Leisure seriously to examine their own Circumstances, upon what Foundation their Liberty stands, whom they forfeit for, as well as for themselves, if they provoke those too far who cannot want Power to do themselves Justice upon them: And above all, *for what it is* that they lay their Religious Interest at Stake. Prudence requires all Wise Men to weigh their Actions in the Ballance of Reason, and to judge, whether there is any due Proportion between the Hazard run and the End proposed. It seems to be one of the most sensible Parts of the Miseries of a future State, that the Spirits of the Wretched shall be capable to reflect upon, and reproach themselves with the sordid Trifles, for which they forfeited Eternal Happiness. How mean a Thing will the espousing a Party-Broil appear in the Eyes of your Children, when they shall compare it with the Loss of an Established Liberty of Conscience, and shall reflect that their Fathers forfeited to the publick Justice the Religious Liberties they enjoy'd, by their espousing *Faction*, and joining in with a Party against the just Administration of their beneficent Sovereign; having at the same time not the least Challenge against the said Administration, not one Law broken, not one Priviledge invaded, not one Act of arbitrary Power exerted, no Oppression, no Injustice, no Tyranny to complain of?

In the next place, the *Dissenters* are exhorted to consider on what Terms they stand with the present Government. It is true, that Her Majesty has on all Occasions graciously been pleased to promise them Her Royal Protection, and to preserve the Toleration inviolably: But do they suppose these Promises do not imply the Condition of their Dutiful and Peaceable Conduct and Behaviour? Or do they suggest that Her Majesty is thereby bound in Honour to perform Her Promises in the Letter of them; that they at the same time are left at Liberty to offer the greatest Affronts to Her Person and Administration, upon the Presumption that their Misbehaviour can no way affect Her Majesty's Engagements, which are not at all reciprocal in their Obligations?

This has indeed been the very Practice of the Party now embroiling this Nation; who, in the Case of the War, use the QUEEN just after this manner, tho' it must be acknowledged it is very Disingenuous. Her Majesty, upon the Change of the late Ministry, not supposing that Changing Hands only must immediately oblige Her to Change all Her Measures, went on in the very same Steps of Government as before, and for the carrying on the War in Conjunction with Her Allies; and frequent Assurances were given from the Throne, that it was both Her Majesty's Opinion and Resolution to push *France* on by a vigorous War, to give a safe and honourable Peace to *Europe*, to restore the *Spanish* Monarchy, and satisfy all the Allies.

Immediately the Party thinking they had the QUEEN fast by the Letter of these Promises, fall to Work to raise Factions and Discontents at Home, to ruin Credit, to disable the Ministry, and to make it impossible for the QUEEN to support that War, She had promised to carry on: As if that Promise was not made on a Supposition of the Dutiful Assistance and Concurrence of Her People; and as if Her Majesty was so tied up, that when She should find a Design on Foot to make that very War the Ruin of Her Measures, should find Her Ministry oppressed by a *Faction*, in hopes of plunging Her Affairs into inextricable Difficulties; a Party raised



raised as well abroad as at home against Her Administration; and those Men, who were at the Head of Her Armies appearing openly at the Head of those Parties; and not to act counter to Her Measures only; but to threaten openly to oblige Her to a *Revolution* in Her Household: I say, as if upon Discovery of such Designs carrying on, to make the War impracticable, but at the Hazard of the Peace at home, Her Majesty was not at Liberty to change those Resolutions, and regard the Safety of Her own Government, and the Protection of Her faithful Servants from the Attacks of an enraged Party!

In like manner it seems reasonable to suppose, that notwithstanding Her Majesty's gracious Promises to the *Dissenters* of Protection, and maintaining inviolably their Toleration, yet that this was always to be understood so far Conditionally, that they behaved themselves Dutifully to Her Person, Peaceably to the Government, and kept themselves from embroiling the State: In the contrary to which it must be allow'd to be very Just, if Her Majesty should upon such Occasion recommend it to Her Parliament: That whereas Her Majesty had upon all Occasions indulged the *Dissenters*, not only in the Toleration and Exemption granted them by Law, but in several other Liberties which She might justly have restrained them in; And whereas it might reasonably have been expected, that the *Dissenters* would in return for such Favours have distinguished themselves by their dutiful and affectionate Behaviour to Her Majesty's Person and Government: But that Her Majesty finding on the contrary that the *Dissenters* in general are fallen in with abetting and supporting the Factions and Discontents of a Party, who with an undutiful Behaviour endeavour to disturb the Peace of Her Majesty's Reign, and the just Measures of Her Administration; And that they are not by any peaceable gentle Methods to be reclaim'd from the said Practice; and that the said *Factions* and *Parties* are greatly encouraged and fomented by the said Conjunction and Concurrence of the *Dissenters* with them: That therefore Her Majesty thinks them unworthy any farther Protection; and recommends it to Her People to think of some Methods to reduce them to a greater Sense of their Duty, from which too much Liberty, or the Abuse of that Liberty has encouraged them to decline.

It were to be wish'd the *Dissenters* would timely consider what would be the Consequence, if Her Majesty should be provoked by their present Conduct to proceed in such a manner: And whether it would be difficult to move any Dutiful *House of Commons* so far to enter into Her Majesty's just Resentments, as to take such Measures to humble the *Dissenters* as Her Majesty should think sufficient, and as would effectually take from them all the Power they think they now have, to animate and encourage the *Parties* and *Factions* of the Government.

This is the friendly Advice design'd by this *Letter*. The *Dissenters* are not so ignorant as not to know what is their proper Duty in so nice a Juncture; and that between two Interests so full of Animosity, as it appears our Parties have. It had been their wisest Course at least to have appear'd Neuter and Indifferent; or else to have adhered to the Government, whose Protection they enjoy'd, till something else than meer Party had given them Cause to act otherwise; till they had had just Cause to complain of Oppression, of Injustice, and of some Injuries which the Law might have justified them in seeking Redress against. But while this is their Case, and they have no such Complaint to make, they are wholly inexcusable in their present Conduct: And this is earnestly recommended to 'em to consider of.

It is easy to foresee, that a prejudiced *Dissenter* may break forth in a warm Expostulation at this Advice, and it may be in such Expressions as these:

these: What would you have the *Dissenters* do? What are they Guilty of? This is a Plot to draw them off from their Friends, and to divide them from the *Low-Church*; The *Dissenters* and the *Low-Church* are one in their Interest, and cannot be separated. Who should the *Dissenters* join with? Can they be supposed to join with *Tories* and *Highflyers*, *Jacobites* and *New Ministry*? That is impossible!

It may be reasonable to suppose, that this will be the manner of Reply to the friendly Expostulations of this *Letter*: But all these Retorts shall be thrown aside in a few Words. This *Letter* does not charge the *Dissenters*, or so much as enquire, how far they are concern'd or are not concern'd in the undutiful Conduct of those who are spoken of. The *Dissenters* may ask themselves the Question, what they are Guilty of, and save those who wish them well the unpleasant Office of Discriminating: Neither does this *Letter* offer to divide them from, or engage them to any Side or Party; and for that Reason was not publish'd (tho' long ago written) till all their Joining and Voting on one Side or other, was finish'd and over. The *Dissenters* know best whether there are any of the People here spoken of, among them or no.

They are here only calmly advis'd not to embroil themselves with their Sovereign and with Her Administration, for no Cause, and for they know not who. While the Laws and those essential Branches of Government, Liberty, Property and Religion, are whole and untouch'd: What can be of Moment sufficient for the *Dissenters* to appear against the Government, if the Laws are not broken?

If it be not true, that the *Dissenters* have too much join'd with, abetted, countenanced and assisted the *Faction* aforesaid in these Things, it is by so much their Advantage, and this Advice may be thought so far Needless: But if they lay their Hands on their Hearts, they may see more Cause for this Advice than they are willing to own.

Again, It may be offered in Excuse of the *Dissenters*, that although perhaps some hot Men among the *Dissenters* may have been too forward, and may have shewn some Indiscretion, yet that the whole Body of the *Dissenters* ought not to suffer Blame on their Account.

*Answer.* The Advice is to the *Guilty* only, and it is friendly and brief: That they would stop in time, and see that they involve not the *Innocent* in the Ruin due to their Folly; and to the *Innocent* the Advice is equally wholesome, (*viz.*) To distinguish themselves, by such Methods as they shall see reasonable, from those who are *Guilty*; that it may be known there are some among the *Dissenters*, who do not approve their Indiscretion, and that the Government may be moved not to resent it upon the whole Body.

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FINIS.